RESTORATION REVIEW

The hand that reaches for, grasps, and clings to truth is a hand that reaches upward in response to God and outward in service to others—
And no matter how brawny or rough—or what color—be that hand.

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THEY WENT BACK TO THE SALVATION ARMY

Back in the early 1950's when I was a student at Harvard it was my pleasure to minister to a number of Churches of Christ in the area. One of these was at Worcester, Mass., a city whose name I was never quite able to pronounce to the satisfaction of its natives. The memories come rushing through my mind as I recall the several visits to this typical New England city, which always impressed me as a *foreign* city when compared to what I was used to back in Texas. I made the trip from Cambridge by bus, and it seems that there was always lots of snow and ice. But there were warm-hearted brethren, most of whom had moved up from the South, but a few of whom were New Englanders through and through.

One such brother and his wife had come to us from the Salvation Army. They were a hospitable family, and I was consequently a frequent visitor in their home, enjoying the New England cuisine that one does not soon forget. The brother and his wife had the zeal that we have learned to associate with those who are converted from the sects. They were eager to do things for the Lord. They told of their labor of love while soldiers in the Salvation Army. He was an officer for them, and his conversion to the Church of Christ was doubtless a blow to the Army in the area. And they were indeed a prize catch for the Church of Christ, for they were a solid, native Worcester family, and we were a little group struggling to establish a beachhead in a very difficult field. For years they were the backbone to that work.

Then, lo and behold, they left us. Back to the Salvation Army they went. Even then I was supposed to be something of a "liberal", being at Harvard and all, but I was not yet ready to believe that one could walk out on us like that without something being seriously wrong with him. You know, "Concerning those who were once enlightened . . . " I did not quite see then that one might be lost to the Church of Christ without being lost to the Christ. I can see now that he might walk out on us without walking out on the Lord. It disturbed me then far more than it would now, even though I still prefer that our dissenting

brethren stick around and help us cultivate the kind of brotherhood they want us to be by correcting the deficiencies that tempt them to walk out.

I had not thought of this Worcester family for years, but while watching the Rose Bowl parade in Pasadena on TV I was impressed with the float entered by the Salvation Army. The theme of the parade, which was led by Senator Dirkson, serving as grand marshal, was "Life's Greatest Adventure." The Army entry, which was rather modest in comparison to its exquisite competitors, featured the idea that "To Love the Unloved" is life's greatest adventure.

I thought of that New England family that had left the Salvation Army to join the Church of Christ, but had returned to them after being with us for several years, to the chagrin and disappointment of us all. "That's why they left," I said to myself, "for with us they were missing life's greatest adventure."

The brother explained to us Church of Christ folk why he felt compelled to rerum to the Army. It was simply that he wanted to do more for the down and out, and that he missed the satisfaction of doing something for fallen humanity that he had while an officer in the Salvation Army. At that time our little group was meeting in a residence that we had purchased, and we had plans of erecting a building on the large lot someday, and we were working to that end. The brother seemed to feel that the Church of Christ had ambitions to solidify its position in his city, but little or no interest in comforting the poor and needy.

He was thoroughly converted to the doctrinal soundness of our position, and this sustained him for a long time. After all, the Church of Christ is right. But he had been conditioned to believe that the essence of Christianity is to be like Christ, to give one's self to the alleviation of human suffering to the glory of God.

I recall my fumbling efforts to dissuade the brother from leaving us. They were such a fine Christian family with delightful teenagers, and we needed them. We had too few as it was. It was a matter of his believing in Church of Christ *doctrine* but in the Salvation Army's *practice,* and I found it difficult to convince him that doctrine is more important than practice. It didn't make sense to think of him as a heretic or as one who was "falling from grace," for he was taking steps that would enable him to serve Christ *more*, not less. He was not leaving because of the allurements of the world, as Paul said Demas did, but because he wanted to involve himself in the human predicament like Jesus did. He left, not because we made religion too difficult, but because we made it too easy.

If I had it to do over my approach to him would have been different. (I would have commended him for his desire to be truly Christian in giving succor to the poor. I don't think any of us troubled ourselves to do that, for we were not thinking of the poor that he wanted to help, but of our own difficult task to build another church in Worcester.) I would have pointed out that the Church of Christ with which he had identified himself for some years was a great and glorious brotherhood with much to offer the Christian world. But I

would have admitted that we have some serious deficiencies and that in some important ways we were imminently unchristian. I would have urged him to stay with us in order to persuade us that the Church of Christ should also be doing what the Salvation Army is doing.

I would have suggested that he just might go back to the Salvation Army and do the good works that his heart yearned for *without* leaving the Church of Christ. We could then introduce him as a brother who is a Christian all week as a soldier in the Salvation Army and a Christian on Sunday by being a member of the Church of Christ! Seriously, something like this could have proved satisfactory, for the brother recognized the importance of the Lord's Supper and of gathering with the saints around His table on Lord's Day. So he could have kept meeting with us and still worked with the Salvation Army, and he could have also enjoyed the sense of mission in endeavoring to lead us to be more mindful of the poor.

But my view of fellowship was not then sufficiently broad to make such a suggestion. So we lost him and his family. But I repeat: *that doesn't mean the Lord lost him.* Perhaps the dear brother *had* to do what he did. He may have found the Lord's words impelling: "Inasmuch as you did it unto one of these, the least of my brothers, you did it unto me."

Indeed, life's greatest adventure *is* to love the unloved. We have much to learn from the Salvation Army. Let us not be so self-deceptive as to assume that Jesus fed the poor in order to make members of the Church of Christ out of them. He ministered to them because they had need and because He loved them.

It is tragic if we miss life's greatest adventure because of our concern for doctrinal purity or our preoccupation with self-maintenance.

Let us face the painful fact that the Church of Christ is *not* where one should cast his lot if he desires to give his life to suffering humanity. The most miserable of God's creatures would knock on many a door asking for help before they would ever knock at our door. And even then some of them, because of their color, might feel compelled to knock at the *back* door.

After all, what is the Church of Christ trying to do in places like Worcester, Mass.? Establish itself. This consists in gathering a southern colony as a nucleus and proceeding to make things as they are in Nashville and Dallas or Abilene and Lubbock. We build buildings and pay a preacher to minister to us as soon as we are able. We preach sermons and baptize a few. We have a system going that we call *a faithful church,* one that is maintained according to the status quo. It is *ours,* bearing the right name and repeating the right externals.

We are in the real estate business more than in the business of making men whole. An announcement out of Fort Worth is to the effect that two big churches are going to unite and make one big, big church and erect a million dollar edifice. This is what the Church of

Christ is doing in Fort Worth. But what is the Salvation Army doing? How about their buildings?

We may assume this to be the goal of our congregations in the so-called difficult fields. The ultimate is to be big and influential like the churches in Texas and Tennessee. It is a rare congregation indeed that has any such intentions as the Salvation Army. There are of course encouraging signs that we are becoming more Christian, such as that congregation up north that sold its building in suburbia and moved to the inner-city so that it could minister to those living in the slums.

We can believe that we are maturing, and part of the maturation process is for us to see that there *are* good reasons for people to leave us. They tire of building programs and sermonizing, of cliches and piddling, of politics and partyism, and of going to church all the time and sitting. They want to do something for Jesus. They want to be a blessing to those who are suffering. They want to think and question. They want to ignore Nashville and Abilene and Austin and Lufkin and be free men in Christ. They want to share in life's greatest adventures.

And so they leave. Many others would if they were younger. Many others who are young are tempted to.

But we hope they don't, for we need them more than anyone else does. We brought them into the Church of Christ. Now their mission can be to lead us to the Christ. What a blessed thought!

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THE PARABLE OF THE SEMINARY ROOMMATES

It was a sleepy afternoon in May when John Paul made his way across the green at Sunbury Seminary to his class in Homiletics. It was a great day. The future was bright. Soon he would be graduating. He felt reasonably well prepared for the challenges before him. He had studied everything from church history to pastoral counseling, and from the psychology of mysticism to phenomenological theology. He was near the top of his class, and his professors were reassuring that he would be successful as a clergyman. He seemed to have no doubts about his calling as he contemplated his ordination and induction into the ministry.

Homiletics was one of those required courses that held no particular interest to him. True, he was learning about sermon structure, and he was getting good experience in delivering sermons and hearing his classmates do so, but it all appeared a bit artificial. He longed for the time when he would have his own church with real audiences. But today's

class might not be as boring, for along with the dry lecture from the lethargic professor, there was to be a practice sermon by his own roommate, Greg Allison.

Prof. Huffines was to talk about Fosdick, which meant that he was moving into the contemporaries in his lectures on preaching. He had given them everybody from Savonarola and Luther to Knox and Calvin and from Talmadge and Spurgeon to Moody and Jowett. John, along with roommate Greg, had been waiting all semester for the twentieth century. Fosdick was modern. At least he didn't preach on stale subjects like "The Methods and Fruits of Justification" and "Eternal Atonement." His topics savor with modernity: "On Catching the Wrong Bus", "Science Demands Religion", and "On Being Only a Drop in the Bucket". Even old Prof Huffines ought to look good lecturing on Fosdick.

John was impressed with Prof. Huffines' comments about Fosdick's theory of preaching. "Harry Emerson Fosdick believed that a sermon is direct personal address, individual consultation on a group scale, intended to achieve results," said Huffines. "A sermon should creatively get things done, then and there, in the minds and lives of the audience; it should be a convincing appeal to a listening jury for decision."

John's mind began to drift, he wondered what kind of a preacher he would make, whether his sermons would be anything like what Fosdick says they should be. He had delivered only four sermons: one in his Homiletics class, two as a supply pastor at rural churches, and one to his home congregation on youth Sunday. He doubted if he had been "creative" like Fosdick says, or if he ever could be. True, he had shared his faith in Christ with many others, and since high school days he had witnessed for his Lord on the athletic field and in the classroom. But these sermons . . . And becoming a clergyman . . . It was all rather' confusing. It seemed that he might always be just a layman.

A layman? Fosdick was saying something about *laymen.* The professor had his attention once more, for he was telling of Fosdick's view of how Christ was preached by the early church.

"In recovering Christianity as a layman's religion we are getting back to the place where Christianity started," Huffines said, reading from Fosdick.

"Neither Jesus nor any of His disciples were members of the priesthood or the clergy. They were laymen, all of them. The Master, a layman Himself, talked nothing but layman's language."

Jesus was really a layman, John repeated to himself. *Here we sit, studying to be clergymen, something Jesus never was. And Jesus talked in layman's language, but here we are learning another language. It all seems so strange . . .*

Prof. Huffines continued to read from Fosdick:

"Moreover, early Christianity was spread across the Roman Empire, not by clergymen, but by laymen who translated the gospel into terms of daily life."

Fosdick's words reminded John of the doubts he had earlier in life about being "called of God" to be a minister. Back in high school he had shown such dedication to things spiritual that his parents and friends at church kept insisting that he should enter the ministry. He really wanted to be a lawyer, a gentleman of the bar. Since reading about Clarence Darrow in *Attorney for the Damned*, he had had his heart set on helping people in trouble. He was especially touched by the case of a school chum's mother who was left a widow when her husband, a policeman, was killed in an effort to prevent a burglary while off duty, but was denied his insurance because of a technicality buried amidst the fine print in the policy. John burned with indignation as he saw her children struggle to get through school. He had visions of himself in a courtroom correcting this grave injustice. Surely this was his calling, if indeed God calls men to particular fields of endeavor.

But due to his love for the Bible and his leadership in youth work at the First Church, it seemed to be taken for granted by everyone that he would become a minister. His pastor spoke to him often of good old Sunbury Seminary, and the good sisters would judge the girls he dared to date in terms of what kind of a minister's wife they would make. Even when he spoke to the congregation on Youth Sunday, pointing to the evils in society that can be corrected only by responsible Christian service in the courts of justice, the people praised him lavishly and spoke fondly of the time when he would enter the ministry and have a pulpit of his own.

Robert Paul, a business man of moderate success and a pillar in the family's church, seemed never to realize his son's desire to be a lawyer. He would sometimes caution John about the financial sacrifices involved in being a minister, but he was pleased with the direction his son's life was taking, and he revealed a subdued pride when telling people he had a son in seminary. To be sure, it enhanced his prestige with the First Church.

Mrs. Paul would surely have been a minister had she been a man, for she was deeply religious and had a sense of mission in all that she did. She was either the president or secretary of a half dozen clubs around town, and almost every organization at First Church depended on her for its existence. And everyone knew that while Mr. Paul was a able business man his church leadership found its strength in his wife. But she was a kind and gentle woman, solicitous to her husband and attentive to her children. She was well aware of John's interest in becoming a lawyer, and talked with him about it as a good mother should, but she never made any effort to conceal her suspicions about the character of men who succeed at the bar. Besides, her son was a natural for the ministry, and it was evident that he was called of God to be a clergyman.

The professor was through talking about Fosdick and it was about time for Greg Allison to give his sermon to the class. But John was more pensive than usual. Fosdick's point about it being laymen rather than clergymen who carried the gospel to the lost world gripped his mind like a vice. *Of course* he wanted to be a minister, even though his dreams

of a legal profession had not grown dim during his years in college and seminary. He would soon have a church of his own, and someday perhaps a large and influential one. That would please his mother. He was sure now that this is what he wanted, for how can one serve God better than being a minister.

Still Fosdick's words set off a round of questions. *If* I *were now in law school instead of seminary would* I *not be preparing for the ministry? Is not the Christian lawyer a minister too? Is the distinction between clergy and laity a valid one? If it was the laity that first carried the message of Christ to the world, as Fosdick says, then what is role of the clergy?*

But the point that disturbed John most of all was that the primitive church had no professional clergy, and yet it made an effective witness for Christ throughout the empire. The modern church not only has a sumptuous clerical system, but a highly structured parochial school system to support it, and yet its influence in the world is nil and its witness for Christ is weak.

Fosdick had spoken of "recovering Christianity as a layman's religion," and John supposed that something like this must be the answer. *It is a renewal of the laity that is needed,* John was thinking. *If the laity would assume its responsibility, then the work of the clergy would be effective. The clergy must arouse the laymen and thus restore the church's spiritual vitality,* he was saying to himself, as if to assign himself such a task.

But what was it really that motivated the laity of the primitive church?, he went on to question himself, somewhat uncomfortably. *Was it the clergy that aroused them? But they had no clergy, and yet they witnessed for Christ everywhere.*

John Paul was momentarily confused by the array of questions he was heaping upon himself. It all seemed strange just then—seminaries, sermons, pulpits, theology, homiletics, church edifices— all this in the name of the penniless carpenter who simply talked to people about the kingdom of God. *But this is the twentieth century. We can't live in the past. Things have to be different today. Besides, Greg has begun his sermon and* I *must listen to him and stop this foolish thinking,* he said to himself, as if to chide.

Greg was the only Pennsylvanian among the students at Sunbury, but he was more recently from New York's eastside where his family had moved following his father's death. His mother had moved the children to New York from a Pennsylvania farm so that she might accept an offer from a doctor friend to work in a hospital. They were from a long line of Friends, so Greg was the only Quaker at the seminary as well as the only Pennsylvanian. He was indeed the only Quaker that John Paul knew anywhere.

Yet there was some question as to whether Greg should be considered a Quaker any longer for when he enrolled in the seminary he wrote "Undecided" in the space that asked for denominational preference. He shared this distinctive classification with only one other

student, a lad from Tennessee who had rebelled against his parochial background and was in search of a more liberal church in which to minister.

But Greg's indecision was not in rebellion to his family's church, but due to the fact that there was hardly a place for clergymen among the Quakers. His father had died after a long. painful illness, during which he showed such a quiet courage that Greg was inspired to give his life to God and to build the hope and faith into people's lives that he saw in his father. It was while he was away in college that he had his first contact with ministerial students, and this association persuaded him that the professional ministry was the most effective way for him to serve God, despite the non-clerical influences of his Quaker background.

Greg had told John about the reaction of his mother to his decision to enter the ministry. "Your father was one of God's ministers," she said to Greg, "even while he was a farmer. At our meetings he read the Word and gave testimonials, and he shared his faith in Christ with others. He visited the sick, ministered to the poor, and buried the dead." Then she added: "That is what we all did, as you know, at our little meeting. We were all ministers. Is this not what all Christians are? If all God's children would but serve each other and minister to the needs of others, there would be no need for…

Greg recalled how she caught herself lest she discourage him in what he had his heart set upon. But he remembered a letter she wrote him while he was still in college, contemplating seminary: "My dear son, if you become a clergyman will you not be working for a church instead of for yourself and God? Your father was always a free man, a man of the soil and a man of the Spirit. So with your Uncle Frank, who was a minister of Christ by being a carpenter. Never was there a man who served God more faithfully than he, but always he made his own living. Greg, you mustn't get mixed up with all these church institutions. You'll be serving them, and for money, rather than God. Now with a college education you could be a teacher or a lawyer or something."

But she had said no more about her misgivings, not even the first word since Greg had entered seminary three years ago. Greg had returned to New York in the summers to serve as supply minister for a church on Long Island, and his mother came frequently to hear him preach, and it gave him opportunity to visit her often in New York's eastside.

It was on these trips into the inner-city that Greg was introduced to a Christian ministry that he hardly knew existed. His mother told him of a Quaker group that was working within the worst section of a Negro ghetto. He found them exterminating rats, babysitting for working mothers forsaken by their husbands, counseling with prostitutes, treating dope addicts, sobering up the drunks, and feeding hungry kids deserted by their parents.

Greg became acquainted with other groups working in New York's slums, some of whom were highly talented professional people. Teachers, dentists, physicians, engineers, business people, and college students were giving of their time and money to save

humanity from hunger, poverty, ignorance, disease, and crime. He was especially impressed by the work of a young lawyer, who, upon leaving law school, had gone to Harlem to begin his practice, dedicated to the task of defending poor, ignorant Negroes against the many injustices they were forced to endure, especially from unscrupulous landlords and city officials. His church was helping him so that he could do this without charge.

It disturbed Greg that all these people were only on the fringe of the church. Not only was the church giving but little of its financial resources to such efforts, but it was, as he himself, barely aware of what was going on, being so involved with its own housekeeping. These people were the down and outs that Jesus came to save, the "common people" that heard him gladly. They were a stormy sea of suffering humanity ready to be calmed by the balm of Christian love. Yet the church yea, even the clergy had ignored them.

It made Greg all too conscious of the easy pulpit and the comfortable pew at his church in suburbia. The summers were easy for him, standing behind his sacred desk in an air-conditioned sanctuary, uttering his theological platitudes to a people who understood little and cared less. In his ministry there were no jails, or blood, or vomit, or whores, or hoodlums, or police raids, or street fights. There were sermons, and tea, and office hours, and routine pastoral calls, and such tripe as "That was a lovely sermon; you're going to make such a wonderful minister!" It was a world untouched by human agony and misery.

But Greg was a quiet, unassuming young man, and those closest to him at the seminary knew little about what he believed. Even John was unaware of what he planned to say in his sermon, but he was sure that Greg would speak from his heart, as all the seminarians were encouraged to do.

As Greg stood before the homiletics class he left no impression that he was merely practicing or fulfilling an assignment for the sake of a grade. His eyes revealed a quiet anxiety and there was urgency in his voice as he announced the subject of his sermon. It was already apparent that he was really going to say something and not just deliver a properly-structured sermon.

The Prostitution of the Ministry was his subject, and his text was the words of Jesus: "The Son of Man came not to be ministered to, but to minister." He observed that all sacred things can be and are prostituted: art, literature, medicine, civil authority, sex, or one's talents. But the most vicious form of prostitution of all was in religion, and it was this grievous sin that Jesus could not tolerate, for he showed forbearance to those who were tragically involved in prostituting their sex while condemning those who trafficked with men's souls.

Greg noted that Prof. Huffines shifted uneasily in his chair. Jesus came *to minister, to serve*— not to be ministered to, while His church and its clergy are content to use His gospel for its own comforts. The church is not a haven of mercy, giving itself to the

alleviation of human misery; it is a conglomerate institution calculated to perpetuate themselves and to safeguard its own interests. While Jesus came to save the world and thus make men whole, the clergy has been content to leave mankind fragmented while preserving the wholeness of its own system.

Greg was careful to recognize that many clergyman are innocently trapped in the system that prostitutes the ministry. In seminary he is trained to follow a party line, and he is soon to learn that he must preserve the system that is committed to preserving him. He dare not disturb the *status quo* even if the deepest longings of his soul dictate it. He must drink the bitter cup that places expediency before service. He must resign himself to minister to those who pay him rather than to those who need him. He must forger what it means to be a free man. He must leave the delinquents, the deprived, and the poor (and the blood, and guts and tears) for those to serve who have *not* entered the ministry!

John could hardly believe his eyes and ears. Greg was giving expression to John's own doubts in words that he never expected to hear at Sunbury Seminary. But John moved to the edge of his chair and was completely absorbed as Greg told of the work of the Christian lawyer in the ghettoes of Harlem.

It is not a matter of eliminating the clergy, Greg said, *"but of doing away with the laity, for all of us are God's clergy."* He insisted that Christians from all walks of life, like that Harlem lawyer, must realize that their mission in life is to minister to the needs of humanity. Whatever our vocation be we must use it to make men whole as Jesus made men whole. It is not a renewal of the laity that is needed, but a renewal of the church itself by a recovery of its mission of ministry, he urged. And he concluded with the unfinished words of his godly mother: "If all God's children would but serve each other and minister to the needs of others, there would be no need for a professional clergy,"

Greg Allison graduated from Sunbury that summer, but he was not soon forgotten by the seminary, especially by Prof. Huffines. After graduation he cast his lot with "the fringe of the church" working with the culturally deprived in the slums of New York. He was soon lost in that sea of suffering humanity, and lost to the institutional church; but he found the life that is life indeed. And the words of His Lord were sweeter and more meaningful than ever: "He that loses his life for my sake shall find it."

John Paul also graduated from the seminary and accepted a call to a church in suburban Chicago. Trusting in the Lord and in the guidance of the Spirit, he laid before the congregation his views of what the Christian ministry should be. "As each has received a gift, employ it for one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace," he exhorted them from the scriptures. The congregation responded in a way similar to the simple Quaker meetings that Greg had told him of, with the members ministering to one another. It was like "the church in thy house" that the scriptures mention. They were soon aware of the

work to which God had called John Paul, and with their assistance he took a law degree from the University of Chicago.

Now he has a law office at the edge of Chicago's Skid Row. On his office door there is a shingle that reads "John Paul, Attorney at Law," Below that there is a black plaque embossed with gold letters that read: "I have come that they might have life, and have it abundantly,"—*the Editor*

How immense appear to us the sins that we have not committed.—*Madame Necker*

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The Quest of God . . .

THE HOUND OF HEAVEN

It is the thesis of this essay that God so loves man and is so concerned for his well-being that He persistently seeks to win man's devotion and loyalty, and that He therefore is constantly manifesting Himself to man in one way or another in an effort to gain a response from him. This is to say that God is "the Hound of Heaven," to use Francis Thompson's description of Him, who *pursues* man through all of life's experiences, causing man to be conscious of the presence of something greater than himself, and forcing man into a confrontation with his Maker in which he must respond in some way to God's persistent love.

This is what we mean by *the quest of God.* It is God's search of man that we speak of, not man's search of God. It is this that makes Christianity imminently superior to any rival religion: they are all efforts on man's part to find God, while Christianity is God's quest of man.

Testimony of Scripture

The scriptures are themselves testimony to God's quest of man. They reveal, to the extent that paper and ink can, the mind of God, His nature and His purposes. The Bible might be described as the record of God's pursuit of fallen humanity. Stephen begins his summary of revelatory events with: "The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham," It was God that took the initiative.

It is, however, the wonderful Person of the scriptures who best illustrates the heavenly pursuit of man. Paul describes him as: "He *is* the image of the invisible God . . . In him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell" (Col. 1) In 2 Cor. 4 he speaks of "the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the likeness of God. The Messiah said: "He who has seen me has seen the Father also,"

In the Messiah the Father sent the likeness of Himself into the world in hot pursuit of man. "God sent the Son into the world, not to condemn the world, but that the world might be saved through him." (John 3) Paul explains that this was at great cost: "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God," (2 Cor. 5).

Paul recognizes that the apostles were instruments of God's pursuit: "So we are ambassadors for Christ, God making his appeal (or *pursuit)* through us," In the same context he says that "God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself." (2 Cor. 5)

The scriptures do, of course, teach man that he is to *seek* after God, but it can hardly mean more than that man is to respond to God's witness in his life. In Acts 17 Paul explains that God created man, giving him "life and breath and everything," so that he should "seek God in the hope that he might feel after him and find him." But notice that he goes on to say: "Yet he is not far from each one of us, for in him we live and move and have our being,"

Man's search is, therefore, a *turning to* one who is already present but not yet acknowledged, not a looking for one who is at a distance. This is why Jesus could assure the disciples: "Seek and you shall find; knock and it will be opened to you." (Matt. 7)

It is God who is in search of man, not man in search of God. A real search is one that can end in failure, and of course God's search for fallen man can be in vain, for success depends on man's will. Man must desire that God overtake him and find him. This is why man's search for God can never be the same thing, for it cannot ever be futile. Since God is always willing, man can never fail to find Him. In all of history no man has ever sought after God without finding Him. But of course God finds only a few of those whom He pursues, for most men do not wish to be found.

In his poem *The Hound of Heaven* Francis Thompson explains why man dares not to let God find him.

I fled Him, down the night and down the days;
I fled Him, down the arches of the years;
I fled Him, down the labyrinthine ways
Of my own mind; and in the midst of tears
I hid from Him, and under running laughter . . .
(For though I knew His love Who followed,

Yet was I sore adread

Lest, having Him, I must have naught beside.)

Man is fearful that if he yields to God's search for him that he will have to surrender the carnal attractions of the world. In a moment of candor one man expressed well what Thompson meant in his poem when he said, "I can't turn to God now because I like my women."

When the philosopher Plotinus, forsaking all the religions of his third century world, said "The gods must come to me, for I can never go to them," he was not being arrogant or irreverent. He was only saying what every yearning human heart realizes: *if there is a true God he will surely come to me, and not wait for me to find him.* And so Plotinus refused to attend the lavish temples, contending that God does not dwell in temples built by men, waiting for men to come to Him.

Testimony of Nature

Alexander Campbell insisted that God reveals Himself through *three* books rather than just one. One book is the natural world in whose pages we see the glory of God manifested in hill, dale and stream. The second is the book of human nature in which man reads of himself as created in the image of God. The third is, of course, the Bible, which is a *special* revelation with distinct purposes.

According to *Romans* 1 Paul sees much in the first book, for he observes that the heathen could have read clearly from the pages of nature the divine qualities of the Creator, thus avoiding the darkness that enveloped them. "Ever since the creation of the world," the apostle asserts, "his invisible nature, namely, his eternal power and deity, has been clearly perceived in the things that have been made. . ."

The *invisible* qualities of God are clearly *visible* in nature, he is saying. That which cannot be seen through the senses can be discerned in the mind as one beholds the wonders of creation. "Phenomena discloses noumena," is the way theologians put it, which is to say that the marvelous display of nature conveys the idea of God. Schonfield's rendition is helpful: "Ever since the creation of the world those unseen qualities of his, his immaterial nature, power and divinity, could be clearly perceived, apprehended through his works."

God's handiwork makes manifest the perfect qualities of His nature. So clear is this revelation of God's invisible nature in things created that men are without excuse when they worship and serve creatures rather than the Creator, Paul goes on to argue. The terms he uses are forceful: *God's eternal power and deity are clearly perceived in the things that have been made.*

By “eternal power” Paul probably means that the very idea of eternity is related to God’s power, so evident in nature. He may have the Greek philosophers in mind, as MacKnight thinks, for they were preoccupied with such notions as perfect forms, eternal souls, the Unmoved Mover, and even Logos as divine reason. Actually they perceived God, but did not acknowledge Him “their senseless minds were darkened.” While Aristotle admitted that there must be a Mover who is *unmoved* (explaining all change in terms of *movement),* he could not bring himself to say that the universe is *created.* It is eternal, he says, and thus *uncreated.* So despite all Aristotle’s wisdom he found no place for a creator God, though his logic forced him to admit to an Unmoved Mover, which to him was no more than a biological principle.

So Paul stresses the fact that the very universe probed by Aristotle and the other philosophers bears witness to God as creator. Thus His *eternal power* is manifest in the world. The Unmoved Mover is not a principle, but One who reveals Himself to man by the things He has made.

In saying that “deity” is clearly perceived in creation, Paul must mean that the universe reveals the totality of the attributes of God, something like a mirror reflects the fulness of the one standing before it. Since the original Greek term appears nowhere else in the scriptures, it is difficult to be sure of its meaning. The *King James* rendition of “Godhead” makes it no clearer. It is enough to say that Paul sees in the works of nature a reflection of the essence of God.

All this cannot be made to mean that the heathen had as much, or almost as much, revelation of God in the phenomena of nature as we have in the scriptures. Paul only means that God’s manifestation in nature is adequate to elicit a response from man. The witness of nature is sufficient to show God’s supremacy and His right to be reverenced by man. It certainly is adequate to demonstrate “the glory of the immortal God” and thus turn man from the worship of “images resembling mortal man or birds or animals or reptiles.”

The Hound of Heaven thus pursues man in His witness through the things He created. And the apostle asserts it has always been so: “In past generations he allowed all nations to walk in their own ways; yet he did not leave himself without witness, for he did good and gave you from heaven rains and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness” (Acts 14).

It is a beautiful thought that in His search for man, God, in His mercy, whispers to us through the rain that falls and through the fields ripe for harvest. “The heavens are telling the glory of God; and the firmament proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge” *(Psalms* 19). It is clear enough that God speaks through the wonders of nature. If man would only listen!

The psalmist was conscious of such pursuit on God’s part when he wrote:

Whither shall I go from thy Spirit?

Or whither shall I flee from thy presence?
If I ascend to heaven, thou art there!
If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there!
If I take the wings of the morning
and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea,
Even there thy hand shall lead me,
and thy right hand shall hold me. (Psalm 139)

Testimony of Human Nature

Of all creation it was said only of man "Let us make . . . " Not only is man the crown of all creation, but he is the only creature made in the image of God. If indeed we are made in God's likeness, then we have insight into His nature by a study of ourselves. A study of a text in *The Psychology of Man* may, therefore, reveal more about the character of God than we would have supposed.

When the poet said "The proper study of mankind is man," he spoke an important truth, but it may be equally important to say "The proper study of God is mankind." And we have a distinct advantage here, for when the psychology books talk about instincts, drives, motives, emotions, intelligence, and the like, the reference is to things we personally experience. This is why college students often get excited about psychology. "This stuff is about *me,"* they will say. Can we tell them that it is, therefore, about God also, for man is in some way the image of God? If psychology helps us to understand the nature of Mind, which of all creation is distinct in man, then it helps us to understand God, who is Eternal Mind.

By Mind we do not mean the brain, or intelligence, or rationality, or consciousness, or memory, or will; but all these together and much more too. We mean *being* itself, or the *inner-man,* or *selfhood.* Mind is thus *personality.* Only man is a person as God is a person. Only man partakes of *Being,* which is God. We know what it is *to be.*

It is deep inside himself, as well as in nature and in the Bible. that man experiences Heaven's presence. Man's consciousness of himself makes him aware of something like himself that is greater than himself. This psychological fact, supported by centuries of human history, supports our thesis that every man at some point in his life comes face to face with God. It may be amidst tragedy, or the birth of a child, or self-scrutiny, or in the presence of the Matterhorn; but eventually man "paints himself into a corner" in his efforts to ignore God.

One's confrontation with God may come in the classroom. Those of us who teach philosophy may see more instances of it than other educators—and how many instances are there that the teacher never *sees?* The philosopher may observe it when the question of

reality is being considered. *What is really real?* is a question, once diligently pursued, that may take one to the very presence of God.

Paul Tillich is saying something like this when he observes "But what is 'really real' among all the things and events that offer themselves as reality? That which resists me so that I cannot pretend its nonbeing. The really real is what limits me."

Man is not for long awed by money, fame or position; nor by anything over which he may exercise lordship. Such things do not limit him, and so they are not really real. But there is One whose nonbeing he cannot pretend. He *feels* the presence of such a Being, both in himself and in other human beings. This *feeling* is one more aspect of God's persistence. Maybe this is what the Bible means when it says God put eternity into the heart of man.

The scriptures certainly teach that something bad can happen to the *feeling* that would naturally serve as avenues for God's entrance into our lives. Paul speaks of those "darkened in their understanding, alienated from the life of God because of the ignorance that is in them, due to their hardness of heart; they have become callous (or *past feeling)* and have given themselves up to licentiousness, greedy to practice every kind of uncleanness." (*Eph*. 4)

Their *feelings* could have saved them from a life of frustration. The apostle also speaks of those whose consciences are seared (1 *Tim.* 4), and of those who are inhuman (or *without natural affection*). (2 *Tim.* 3:3) In *Romans* 1 he speaks of the heart and conscience as areas of God's revelation: "They show that what the law requires is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness and their conflicting thoughts accuse or perhaps excuse them."

In the same passage Paul sees God's kindness as a means of reaching man, even if he yet has no Bible: "Do you not know that God's kindness is meant to lead you to repentance?"

By his very nature, as a being of God's likeness, man is on God's frequency. God will in some way speak to his heart, to his *feeling*, to the eternity within him. *But* man must not disturb the knobs on his set, and certainly he must not tear the wiring loose. God has given man feeling and freewill, and He beckons for his response. If he sears the longings of his heart with the hot iron of carnality and spurns the gift of freedom for the sake of conformity, then God's pursuit is in vain, even when it makes its way deep within the recesses of his own soul.

Augustine should serve as an example of what it means to respond to the pursuit of the Hound of Heaven:

"And I beheld the other things below Thee, and I perceived that they neither altogether are, nor altogether are not; for they are, since they are from Thee; but are not, because they are not what Thou art."—*the Editor*

Make it a rule, and pray God to help you to keep it, never, if possible, to lie down at night without being able to say, "I have made one human being, at least, a little wiser, a little happier, or a little better this day."—*Charles Kingsley*

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WHAT MAKES MEN GREAT

GUY LAND

God does not look upon greatness as men do. We have one idea of greatness when we see the lives of the rich, the imminent educators, the important writers, the famous generals, kings and presidents. One gets a different view when he looks into the lives of the great men of the Bible.

Even in the church men are tempted to be great by worldly standards and become something like spiritual sputniks. They want to be high and lofty rather than lowly in heart. Simple trusting faith is rare, but in the Bible it is a mark of greatness.

The faith we read of in *Hebrews* 11 has a certainty about it that explains why the heroes listed there are among the truly great. They had a faith so strong that it was absolute certainty. They show us that the faith of a child of God should be so real and so vital that it goes beyond mere hope. There is certainty about it.

They were great because they had a faith that influenced everything they did and dominated all their actions. A mark of greatness is for one to believe in God in the face of all that the world does to corrupt faith. The world offers ease, prosperity and popularity, while faith in God may lead to hardship and persecution. It is the right choice here that makes one great before God. The Christian is to believe that it is better to suffer with God than to enjoy the pleasures of the world for a season.

The three Hebrews in *Daniel* show us what greatness is when they chose the fiery furnace rather than the rewards of a rich king. John Bunyan illustrated greatness when he said: "With God's comfort in my poor soul, before I went down to the justices, I begged of God that if I might do more good by being at liberty than in prison, that then I might be set at liberty. But if not, His will be done."

A man is great before God when he truly believes that he can never lose by being faithful to God. The world has its rewards, and they are alluring; but the great soul never doubts but what final victory is in God and His word.

The great men of God are those who have gained victory of the senses through the Spirit. The senses say play it smart and get what you can out of life. The senses lay stress upon what can be touched, tasted and handled for the moment. But the Spirit goes beyond sensation, pointing to things eternal.

It was Epicurus who gave the world the philosophy of pleasure as the purpose of life. But even he understood the difference between higher and lower pleasures, and he was not advocating the momentary pleasures of the senses but the elevating pleasures of the soul. He took the long view, for he realized that an intense, momentary pleasure might in the end bring pain. He also understood that the higher disciplines of the mind may be difficult and even painful, but in the end they will bring beauty and peace to the soul.

It is also a respect and devotion for truth that makes men great. He believes that "great is truth and in the end she will prevail." Socrates was great because he believed in the endurance of truth. Wrong sometimes appears the victor over truth. It was so with Socrates who was wrongly executed by the Athenians, and it was so of Christ who was wrongly crucified by Pilate and the Jews. In these instances and many more history has proved that truth, crushed to earth, will rise again.

Fosdick somewhere observes that while Nero once condemned Paul, it was only a matter of time until men named their sons after Paul and called their dogs Nero.

It is so easy to be worldly in attitude and to yield to the allurements of modern society with all its pleasure, fame, and fortune—and the safety that such an escape from reality allows. The rewards for Christian endurance seem so remote and so far away and even uncertain. But it is here that God sees "great faith" in those that see the future as certain. The future is indeed God's and those who truly trust His word. If God has promised or if He has commanded that is enough. The future is assured.

The great heroes of the Bible, such as are described in *Hebrews* 11, were assured that God would do what He said He would do. They were attested and approved—yes, they were great—because they believed God. It is that simple.

To be great before God one may have to reject the greatness that the world gives. He may have to sacrifice the socalled "great career" and refuse the safety of the crowd. He may not be able to make the safe decisions that assure one of the approval of man, but he makes the one decision that bears the approval of God.

It is faith that conquers kingdoms and stops the mouths of lions. Those who have such faith are the truly great of the earth.—321 *Melody Lane, Duncanville, Texas.*

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RESPONSE FROM READERS

In your October issue, page 144, you have a statement that I should have had sense enough to see, but it never occurred to me in just the way you put it. Your "basis of fellowship" if received would put to rest most of the foolish mouthings of our loyal (?) preachers. But if they began preaching this instead of Church of Christ ingrained thought, they would soon find themselves outside the pale of safe teachers. It does not matter how little learning a preacher may have, he will say "Let us unite on the Book," and whatever he says the Book says shuts out all else.—*Ohio*

I wish something could be done (and I am willing to do my part) to arrange a forum at ACC (possibly during Lectureship), whereby you, brother Ketcherside, some ACC representatives, and maybe others could speak regarding fellowship, unity, for faith and opinion, then be questioned by the audience . . . I find quite a bit in your paper that seems objectionable to my thinking, but am really enjoying the exchange between brother Bales and the *Voices of Concern* writers. I also found "Power Politics in Nashville" very interesting . . . *Abilene, Texas*

Bales' review of Pat's article was rather disgusting—a redigest of stuff he has written before and twisted to fit this case. He is one of the most arrogant persons I have read. He has a front to protect at all times, a super-ego to guard at every step. His is a world of blacks and whites—no grays at all. His work has been a sorry performance from his first attack on the person of Logan Fox onward. I wish he could read a little of what some of our more thoughtful theologians have to say on the evils of pride.—*Tennessee*

I find many of the ideas challenging and stimulating. Keep up the good work.—*California*

We are enjoying the *Review* and receiving from it a great spiritual lift and encouragement.—*Missouri*

Sorry about that heat stroke, but I enjoyed your reporting of it.—*Texas*

Be careful, you hear!—*Texas*

I wanted to write and thank you for the ambulance article. The sense of humor as well as the personal spiritual quality which came through so vividly made me feel I knew Leroy Garrett as I had never known him before.—*California*

Sorry to read about your illness. Here is my advice to you: Leave Texas and come to California!—*Los Angeles*

I continue to find real joy and help in both your journal and Carl Ketcherside's. Meyers' article on *King James* is excellent and your editorials throb with both head and heart.—*Arkansas*

If Brother Fox needs any further evidence of dishonesty in the pulpit and eldership, have him contact me. I may not agree with his opinions, but I agree with his right to voice them and furthermore I admire his courage in making them public.—*Georgia*

I deeply appreciate your editorials, and thank God that I not only have found Jesus, but a fellowship in His spirit with you . . . The Lord has great things in the future for his people!—*Oklahoma*

——THE FRINGE OF THE CHURCH …

Why then do I stay with the Church of Christ? Why not join some other body? … If I jumped the fence it would take me five years to learn the language, and in each case there are disadvantages that are fully as unpleasant as those in the Church of Christ. I prefer a known devil to an unknown one. I am what I have learned to be—a Campbellite. In this body I have a certain amount of influence and I know the ropes. I know who the so called important men are. I can serve my Lord better by remaining in my own denomination . . .

I believe I have been given a mission by the Father. When I was in ACC, I watched some of my friends give up believing. They were some of the finest of the students from an academic and potential point of view. They left the C of C in disgust because of the narrowness, ignorance, and downright hatefulness of many of the members they knew. Many of these could have lived full Christ-like lives if they had been introduced to Jesus instead of a stultifying system of legalism and exclusivism. It was my dearest hope to return to ACC as a teacher and minister to these persons.

Since my graduation I have been through maturing experiences. I have read and I have suffered. I have been through the process of vomiting up all of my religion and then being filled with what I believe the Father wanted me to have. But apparently it is not in his plan for me to go to ACC. I am unfortunately a person given to saying *sibboleth* instead of shibboleth, and having to learn a new pronunciation to live in Abilene would, I think, destroy me. I have accepted the fact that I am called to live elsewhere, and now I do not even want to go back to Abilene.

My sophomoric dreams of power and influence died completely, and I adjusted to the thought that I would live on the fringe of the church . . . *Name withheld*

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BOOK NOTES

J. H. Bavinck's *The Church Between the Temple and Mosque* is a study of Christianity's relation with other world religions. Highly readable and informative. 2.65 in paperback.

The Greatest of These Is Love is a treatment of 1 Cor. 13. You will delight in his comment on "Then I shall know even as also I am known." Only 1.45 in soft cover.

If you would like to dip into some philosophy within the context of Christian faith, we suggest *The Creative Advance* by Eugene Peters. We predict you'll find this new and exciting, opening windows that you did not know were there. 2.45.

For only 2.00 you can get *Disciples and the Church Universal.* It touches on the question of unity and our relation to other communions, with articles by Robert Fife, of Christian Church background, Ronald Osborn, a Disciple, and David Edwin Harrell, Jr., conservative Church of Christ.

John Macquarrie's *God and Secularity* is one of a series on "New Directions in Theology Today," which we commend to those who want to know what theologians are saying and who are aware of the breach that exists between theologians and the church. Macquarrie gives five doctrines about God that he believes will preserve the centrality of the Christian faith and yet deal with the problem of secularity. He defines the secularist as one who affirms the temporal, this-worldly character of existence. He believes only in this world, and his only concern is in making it a better world. The point of the book is to determine the extent to which one who is "other-worldly" can relate himself to secularity. The chapters on "God in the World" and "Religionless Christianity" are most informative. Only 1.95 in soft cover.

On Course to the Stars is the story of Roger Chaffee, one of the astronauts who died in the spacecraft fire. It starts with a little boy interested in airplanes and ends with a man on the threshold of space. Written by the astronaut's pastor, it is a story of faith. Buy a copy for that young man or woman in high school or college that should be taking the issues of life more seriously. This deeply moving book is a spiritual experience for anyone. Congressman Gerald Ford of Michigan writes the foreword. It is a colorful volume, and priced right at 3.95 in hard cover.

Faith and Philosophy is edited by Alvin Plantinga and consists of several essays by philosophers who believe that faith and philosophy can and should go together. One deals with mysticism, another with ethics, and one with reason. The most important is probably the one by William Frankena, professor of philosophy at University of Michigan, entitled "Love and Principle in Christian Ethics." He says: "The function of reason and philosophy for the Christian is not simply to serve as an instrument for refuting or otherwise disposing of gentiles, pagans, and unbelievers, but also and especially to serve as a colleague in helping him to understand and deepen the faith that is in him." If you'll really get with this book, it will say much to you. 4.95 in hard cover.

You may now order for only 3.00 the bound volume of *Restoration Review* for 1967. It will have an introduction and a table of contents, and will be bound in bright colors, with dust jacket—all to match the 1966 volume, also available for 3.00. The volume is entitled "Things That Matter Most." Order now.

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